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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, July 3, 2019
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Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein Celebrates Trump's Decision to Back Down on Census Citizenship Question

Columbus was plaintiff in lawsuit that resulted in U.S. Supreme Court rebuking Trump administration, declaring their rationale for demanding citizenship information on 2020 Census questionnaire 'appears to have been contrived'

COLUMBUS, OH—In a one-sentence email from Justice Department officials yesterday, the Trump administration unceremoniously [dropped](#) its bid to add a citizenship question to the 2020 U.S. Census. The controversial decision to add the question sparked a legal battle that began last year as the State of New York was joined by the City of Columbus and other plaintiffs in a [lawsuit](#) that sought to prevent the citizenship question from being added to the 2020 Census. The United States District Court for the Southern District of New York initially ruled in New York and Columbus' favor, stating that the federal government's decision to include citizenship information in the census questionnaire was “unlawful for a multitude of independent reasons.”

After appealing the case to the U.S. Supreme court, the Trump administration was given another setback when the highest court in the land called into question the federal government's reasoning for adding the question, stating that the rationale “appears to have been contrived.” Even officials from the Census Bureau acknowledged that the citizenship question could lead to potentially undercounting millions of people, impacting both federal funding and representation in Congress and the Electoral College.

“This is a big win for a fair and accurate count of all persons in the United States, as required by the Constitution,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “We joined this lawsuit to protect what is in the best interest of Columbus and to stand up for the civil rights of the most vulnerable members in our community. Columbus receives close \$100 million in federal funding, much of which is distributed based upon population figures collected in the census.”

When Columbus joined the lawsuit last year, City Attorney Klein cited the decades of bipartisan recognition that the federal government demanding citizenship information would lead to greatly depressed census participation in communities with large immigrant populations, potentially threatening critical federal funds and fair representation in Congress and the Electoral College.

Prior to the Trump administration's attempt last year, the U.S. Census Bureau had not sought citizenship information on the decennial census form since 1950. In a reversal of nearly seven

decades of settled practice, the bureau also departed from the long-standing and well-established processes for revising the census questionnaire. Decisions to change questions on the decennial census typically have taken several years to test, evaluate and implement.

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